

## **DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

### **Division of Oil, Gas and Mining**

The division does not anticipate a significant impact on our mission statement or the delivery of services resulting from the aging of the population within Utah. Worldwide and regional commodity prices have historically been the most significant driver of services desired by our customers and the future is anticipated in this manner as well. The division will continue to work with companies involved in energy development, government agencies at the federal, state and local level, mineral owners, attorneys, legislators, as well as other stakeholders in achieving the mission of the division.

### **Division of Parks and Recreation**

The division provides a variety of services and incentives for Utah's aging population. Utah State Parks currently offers:

1. Senior Fun Tag: \$35 day-use access pass with \$2 off camping on weekdays for Utahns 62 years and older. (Utah is one of few states with this incentive.)
2. Half-price day-use access for seniors who choose not to purchase the Senior Fun Tag (see above).
3. Reduced green fees for seniors.

The impact of Utah's aging population will likely mean an increased need for full services and amenities in Utah's state parks, an increase in the number of discounted senior access passes and the need for specialized interpretive programming.

Parks and Recreation has and continues to move forward with many renovation projects to improve facilities and amenities within its 42 state parks. Improvements include ADA accessibility, infrastructure, RV accommodations, and walkway and pathway development.

The division anticipates an increase in the number of Senior Adventure Passes and discounted entrance fees, which may impact revenue.

Utah State Parks recognizes this visitor group may enjoy specialized programming, which may require a new or additional focus in our interpretive efforts.

One collaborative approach Utah State Park has undertaken in the past few months is to offer reduced fees for anglers, many of them seniors, at four popular state park areas. This

partnership with the Division of Wildlife Resources provides a reduced fee for 365-day fishing license holders who fish Tuesday through Thursday. We feel this program is well targeted toward seniors, many of whom are retired and have the ability to recreate during the week.

Utah State Parks and Recreation management has also appointed a committee to consider changes in our current fee structure to offer reduced day-use and camping prices during the week. Better accommodating our aging population will be a major consideration in this discussion.

Utah State Parks and Recreation plans to measure its progress by monitoring purchase and use of Senior Fun Tags and other incentives aimed at the aging population. Through this monitoring, we will also know if we are doing enough to encourage this group to enjoy their state park system.

#### Division of Water Rights

The division's primary responsibility is to manage and regulate the use of water in the state. We have several other water related programs, such as licensing of water well drillers and dam safety. In reviewing the issue of an aging population on our programs, we do not believe it will have a significant affect.

#### Division of Wildlife Resources

1. The changing demographics in Utah have the potential to greatly impact the Division of Wildlife Resources. As the population ages, participation in fishing, hunting, and wildlife watching may diminish. This may result in substantial loss of revenue to the agency and thus an inability to adequately address wildlife management needs. The division is actively engaged in recruiting hunters, fishermen and wildlife watchers, especially targeting youth participants. We have several programs to help sustain interest and support for wildlife programs.
2. One of the three objectives in the division's new Strategic Plan's Constituency Goal is to "expand programs to recruit and retain hunters, anglers, and wildlife watchers." The strategic plan identifies specific strategies to address this important objective.

Process and Action Steps: This is addressed in our new Strategic Plan, which has three major goals: 1) Agency Goal: Improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the division, 2) Resource Goal: Expand wildlife populations and conserve sensitive species by protecting and

improving wildlife habitat and 3) Constituency Goal: Achieve broad-based support for division programs and budgets by demonstrating the value of wildlife to all citizens of Utah.

3. Specific strategies and actions are identified in our Strategic Plan. We are already engaged in several agency partnerships as well as private/non-governmental sector efforts that recruit youth participants (e.g., Programs: Community Fisheries Program, Project

Wild, Aquatic Education Program, Hunter Education; Rules/Proclamations: special youth hunts, reduced hunting age for small game license purchase; outreach/awareness opportunities: youth booth/events at Sportsmen's Expo, Utah State Fair, etc.).

4. Process: Broad performance measures are identified and addressed in our strategic plan. Specific indicators could include things like: increased class sizes in Hunter Education, increased numbers of towns/cities with community fishing ponds and the size and number of youth angler mentor groups, etc.; greater numbers of small game hunting licenses sold to youth; number of days DWR hosts youth opportunities at events, expos, fairs, etc. There will be specific DWR employee teams established to develop strategy specific action plans and empowered to implement the strategic plan's goals and objectives.

#### Division of Water Resources

We have reviewed Utah's Project 2030 and find that we do not expect any change in the way we provide services. It is sort of interesting to note that because of the nature of the ownership of water in Utah, we have been dealing with the older generation for years. Our customer base has probably gotten younger over the past 10 years although that may change again in the future.

#### Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands

The division does not anticipate that there will be a significant impact on forestry, fire or state (sovereign) lands from Utah's aging population. The division has identified areas where our agency might see some impact on a lesser level, and identified the programs that the division has in place to help address any issues.

##### 1. Impact of the increase in Utah's aging population

An increase in senior volunteers might have a range of impacts on our field of responsibility, as more people might be volunteering to help work with us (planting trees, helping with public lands clean-up days, etc.), and more people might be volunteering to help work against us (such as involvement with environmental groups challenging resource management decisions). However, the division anticipates that these numbers will be few.

There could potentially be an older population serving in volunteer fire departments, which poses some concerns regarding health and safety for those volunteers and for others. Fire department training issues are addressed by House Bill 146 from the 2004 Utah State Legislature (see page 2).

Possible increase in impacts from wildfire. We will see increasing development in fire-prone Southwestern Utah and other wildland-urban interface areas; this will happen with or without an aging population. We might also see some increased use of forests and recreation areas for leisure, resulting in some increased development with its associated fire risks and suppression costs. The structures themselves provide fuel for wildland fire, and wildland-urban interface fires are much more costly to fight. The most likely impact from wildfire on the aging

population will be in air quality. Smoke from wildfire and prescribed fires poses air quality problems for older people.

Possible increased use of sovereign lands. We might see an increased public use of sovereign lands for recreation – boating, fishing, beaches, etc. We might also see increased extractive use as private industries try to meet energy and other demands.

## 2. How the division will address or respond to anticipated changes

Fire impacts. Increasing development in the wildland-urban interface, with the concurrent increase in fire risk and escalating fire suppression cost, has been a problem for years - with or without an aging population. Consequently, a couple years ago, the Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands initiated a task group to study the issue; this group - which included a couple state legislators, several county commissioners, and others – came up with several recommendations; one of these recommendations resulted in House Bill 146 (“County Cooperative Agreements for Fire Protection”) from the 2004 Utah State Legislature.

House Bill 146 calls for counties to adopt minimum Wildland-Urban Interface Standards regarding construction materials, water availability, road access, and vegetation management in new subdivisions, as well as fire department training and equipment, if they expect to receive state assistance with fire suppression costs. The division developed minimum standards for Utah based on the International Urban Wildland Interface Code. County adoption of these minimum standards will help immensely in mitigating many of the usual impacts of development in the wildland-urban interface.

Because House Bill 146 includes fire department training standards, this should help address health and safety issues with the volunteer fire departments. In regard to the health impacts from prescribed fire smoke, the division will continue to conduct prescribed fires within the parameters set by the EPA, the State Division of Air Quality, and other agencies that monitor and regulate air quality.

Several of the division’s programs also focus on forest health issues; if we can improve the health of Utah’s forests, we can reduce the potential for catastrophic wildfires and their associated impacts.

Sovereign Lands Planning. Because of increasing development or interest in development on and around sovereign lands, the division has already initiated several planning projects to identify needs, issues, priorities and resource management strategies. All of these projects include public scoping and solicitation of input from stakeholders.

The division led the development of the Great Salt Lake Comprehensive Management Plan, which was completed in the year 2000 and will be updated within the next few years. The division initiated a Utah Lake Comprehensive Management Plan last year, and will continue with it in cooperation with the newly developing Utah Lake Regional Commission. The division has initiated a Bear Lake Comprehensive Management Plan, and will also be working on management plans for parcels on the Colorado and Green rivers.

Public Information. Effective communication to the public regarding wildfire risk, air quality problems from wildfire and prescribed fire, and general natural resource issues will be key. The division is involved with several partnerships and groups that help carry these natural resource messages to the public.

Utah Geological Survey

Our management team reviewed the questionnaire and decided we have no issues/implications for Project 2030.